REVIEWER'S BOX

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APR. 29

Before proceeding with the local movies, we would like to first read a little artle from a British newspaper on the subject. Cyril Connolly, reviewing Lillian Ross' book "Picture" had this to say about movies in general. (and I quote)

"An art which seemed capable of incorporating literature, music and drama has only impersonated them. There are too many people and too much money involved for a great work of art to emerge. Since a "great " film costs almost as much to produce as a popular success, and since most of the audiences are generally in their teens, it is a woncer that most films are as good as they are. If publishers had to sell 100,000 copies of every book there would be very little good literature"

Maybe you agree with Mr. Connolly and maybe you don't, but if you feel that you can sneak off to the movies this week instead of reading some "Great" literature, here's what's on the schedule.

On the Local scene

From today until Sunday, the Calvin theater will feature "Off Limits" and Blades of the Three Musketeers. Off Limits stars Bob Hope whho plays tthe part of a fight promoter who has joined the Army to protect his chief investment, Stanley Clements, who has been drafted. When the Army medics accept Hope and reject the fighter, Hope does everything possible to get out of the service, but ends up assigned to a military police unit run by a rule- spouting officer. While in the Army ,Hope's life is further complicated by ~~the fact that~~ Mickey Rooney who has hopes of becoming a prizefighter. Hope avoids him until he see's Mickey's aunt,Marilyn Maxwell. Although Mickey gets offc to a poor start, he eventually becomes champ of a local military base and wins a bout with Hope's former protege, Clements. Hope, with the advantage of knowing both fighter's techniques, masterminds one of the weirdest matches ever filmed. ~~If~~

If you are a bob Hope fan, this is reported to be one of the funniest yet.

For those of you who missed Ivanhoe when it played here a few mont hs ago, it will be playing at the Academy until Sunday.

Music

About a month ago, we used Danny Kaye's new movie "Hans Chrictian Anderson " as the musical background. In view of the fact that we've had several requests for a repeat performance of some of these songs, and the fact that this movie is still breaking records all over the country, we have selected some of the songs from that movie that we didn't have a chance to play last time.

The story, by this time must be well-known to all; the music pretty well explains itself'. The first record will be the King's New Clothes.

Theater Trend in England

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Americans intending to visit Great Britain this spring or summer, either bravely facing the regal jubilations of June 2 or slipping in cautiously before or after that party, are herby warned by Ivor Brown, the theater critic of the "London Observer". If they are in any way inclined toward entering playhouses, they are going to find it very difficult to avoid the works of William Shakespeare. On theother hand, if they like Shakespeare, then Mr Brown says that the banquet is spread.

In the normal course of events a compulsory playgoer in Britain, that is a critic, ticket- agency representative et cetera , gets so heavily bogged down with Shakespeare that, however happily he can absorb the familiar poetry when it is swallowed with reason, he inevitably winces at the news of more Shakespearian productions.

Poor Shakespeare could not forsee the Shakespeare mania. He wrote "The Merchant of Venice", for example, to please the public, to fill his theater and his companie's pockets, and to help pay for the big house he was going to buy in Strattford. If Shakespeare had ever been told that this play would never leave the stage and would be revived in London three times in two months some 357 years later, he would either have fainted or laughed his head off. Every artist must have some confidence in himself, but the best are not insane with vanity. A dramatist who did not bother to preserve his texts (as Shakes. did not) is scarcely to be thought egocentrically mad.

However, the worship of the world has come his way, and his birth place has been turned into the cultural mecca of the continent. This year the rites will be redoubled in Britain, since the name of Queen Elizabeth the Second invites reflection on Elizabeth the First , in whose reign Shakes. came up to London, listned and saw, was heard and seen, struggled and conquered.

With all this fuss going on at home, Shakes. still remains conspicuous among the British exports. Anthony Quayle is leading a group of Strattford players to Australia. During a special season in a specially constructed theater at Strattford-Upon Avon. Ontario, Alec Guinness will play two Shakes. roles. John Gielgood will take a group to Rhodesia, S. Africa, to perform "Richard II" at the Cecil Rhodes Centenary, which is to be attended by the Queen Mother abd Princess Margaret

South African Movies

While our attention is focused on South Africa and the coming Shakes. productions, lets extend our detour from Broadway long enough to hear some interesting facts on the African's view of American Movies.

According to a report by Stephen Watts from Nigeria, less than 100 picture theaters exist for some 30 million people. But wherever the African has access to the flickering screne--and the age of some of the films e ensures plenty of flickering---he is as addicted to movie-going as anybody. A story is told about a place in Sierra Leone where for the past five years they have shown "King Kong" three nights a week and "The Mark of Zorro" three nights a week; Saturday is the gala night and then there is a big double feature attraction-- "the Mark of Zorro" and "King Kong". These two films are a perfect example of what the African likes. He has no objection to vintage films, and he has a preference to seeing the same film more then once or even twice. To advertize a film as new, unless it be a further installation of the familiar, like a new Tarzan adventure, is not to add to its attraction in the least.

The current favorite stars with West African audiences are Rod Cameron and John Wayne , and here lies the clue to local taste in general, which can be summarized in one word---action. The African wants to see the screen hero do something and not just talk. Practically all of them speak 'pidgen English' but they find the dialogue way above their heads in most cases. As one African explained it," When a man fires a gun you know without a doubt what he is doing--- when he just talks he isn't doing anything you can be sure to recognize."

Audience participation is reportedly vocal and volatile. If you have two open-air cinemas within earshot of your hotel (as often happens in some of the larger cities) it is a fine point whether the stepped up sound track of, say Betty Hutton, or an audience encouraging Rod Cameron to greater feats of action ~~and gun play~~ comes closer to deafening.

—"Anywhere I Wander"

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"Bright Road"

The new film at the 55th St. Playhouse is an appealing story about-a fourh grade children and the young teacher doping with the problem chil. Both teachers and pupils in "the Bright Road" happen to be Negroes in a country school but the Emmet Lavery script, based on Mary Vroman's story "See How They Run", is a generalization about childhood rather than a color-line drama.

"Bright Road" treats its children with tenderness and a sense of humor while teaching them a lesson or two. There is more affection than preachment in it, and it is a warm and pleasant motion picture.

Small in physical size, intimate in treatment and construction "Bright Rd." is the kind of picture which attracts awards from agencies promotiong social welfare. It is less an argument, though, than an appreciation--an appreciation of ~~th~~ a child's questioning mind, vivid friendships, and puzzling emotions.

The central figure of the story is a boy named C.T., a nature loving youth with anti-social tendencies and a hatred for 'lies' like Santa Claus, fairy tales and poetic exaggeration. The script simply tells how his teacher raises him from a poor student to a good one, from an outcast to a citizen, by encouraging his good tendencies and militating against his bad ones.

"Bright Rd." is sentimental, but there is the proper seasoning of bitter along with the sweet. Most of the children come from families whose only wealth is mutual affection. Their occassional cruelty to each other is suggested, and the underlying theme of travail is represented by a haunting ballad sung by the school principal in a moment of leisure.

All in all, "Bright Rd." is an enjoyable film for every age.

The Grass Harp

If sound and sensitive characterization could rescue Truman Capote's "The Grass Harp" from its essential listlessness, the new production might do very well.

When the play was given its premiere last season, director Robert Lewis made a gallant stab at unifying its ~~✓~~ randomly assorted moods by pushing his acting company to a somewhat brittle stylization, no doubt with the hope that the author's half-real, half-satyrical figures might take on a cartoon-like vivacity.

In the new production, director Jose Quintero and his talented crew are trying it another way. Some excellent young actors are pouring all the honesty they posess into a thoughtful, moody, and even somber re-doing of the unmanagable play.

In Mr. Capote's plot, some tormented ~~children~~ beings run off into the woods and take to living in a tree house in order to assert their freedom and restore their identities. Here they meet an ex-judge who is similarly disenchanted with life.

Straighforward playing, however, does not make a straight forward play. The author's methods are elliptical, and maybe a bit irresponsible. Mr. Capote is happiest with tangents, forever forgetting what is important about his play and darting off into disquisitions on the love of leaves, the color pink, or the remarkable bathing habits of a pet goldfish. As each of these completes itself, there is a thundering pause; and there is rarely reason for taking up the dialogue again. Played at a brooding pace, the pauses become more emphatic than ever, and "The Grass Harp" gains very little from the earnest and dedicated work of a dozen capable performers.

— "Wonderful Copenhagen"
"I'm Hans Christian Anderson"

JLS

News of two Broadway openings this week. Tonight at the Alvin Theater, Veronica Lake returns to the legitimate stage in the new play Masquerade. This play deals with the amazing adventures of a Italian waif-- the waif being played by Miss Lake. Others included in the caste are Leonard Barry, Charles Korvin, and Lisa Ferraday.

Opening tomorrow night at the 49th St. Playhouse is the new spicy comedy, "Men of Distinction". This play draws its inspiration from a celebrated recent vice trial in New York, and guarentees some surprising developments. The caste of distinctive men includes: David Burns in the role of an outraged district attorney; Orson Bean, a naive young television producer; and Chandler Cowles, a provider of girls. ~~Two~~ Jean Carson and Fran Keegan portray two ladies of the evening.

"I'm Hans Christian Anderson."

? "Thumbelina"